

From: james falkenstein [<mailto:falkenprops@gmail.com>]
Sent: Sunday, October 13, 2019 10:07 PM
To: City Council <council@ashland.or.us>; John Stromberg <john@council.ashland.or.us>
Cc: Kelly Madding <kelly.madding@ashland.or.us>; Bill Molnar <bill.molnar@ashland.or.us>; cfowlkes@rosebudmedia.com
Subject: Concent Agenda Item Falkenstein can't make it to.

Initiation of an Ordinance Amendment Relating to Plaza and Public Space Standards

I am attaching my response to Barry Thalden's letter to the Planning Commission. I don't know Barry, but I do love the hanging flower baskets that I hear he is a major supporter of. But... he shouldn't be telling the city that The Plaza needs looser development standards so that more, and bigger, buildings can be built more easily and cheaper in The Plaza.

This is absolutely not a Consent Agenda Item.

Jim Falkenstein

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October 13, 2019

To the Mayor and City Council
20 E. Main Street
City of Ashland, Oregon 97520
Cc: Kelly Madding, City Administrator

Re: Consent Agenda Item to prepare amendments of the Land Use Ordinance to address the applicability of the public space (plaza) standards for large scale buildings within the Downtown Design Standard Overlay.

Dear Mayor and City Council,

Ordinances are important and should not be dismissed by one SOU board member with architecture credentials.

Currently, there is a downtown planning ordinance (18.4.2.040) that restricts large scale building because – “As the historic scale of buildings was, and remains, a key element that defines community character, there was concern that large buildings could potentially undermine Ashland’s charm.” This ordinance is NOT a “forced taking of private land for public purpose without compensation,” as stated by Barry Thalden.

“What we want to encourage is a continuous downtown streetscape,” is the overarching assumption of Mr. Thalden’s personal opinion, but in no way a fact, or a community request, or an op-ed written by anyone ever.

However, it seems that the Director of Community Development wants to fast track this. “Although the Planning Commission’s discussion explored how this public space standard could be reconsidered throughout the City’s Detail Site Review Zones, staff believes the issue raised relating to downtown property could be addressed more expeditiously by focusing on its application within the downtown and historic district areas at this time. This would allow the code amendments to specifically consider the impact on proposed multi-story developments within the context of the downtown historic district. A review of the application of the plaza requirement in other areas of the City could be undertaken as a separate action as a future date.”

That mumbo-jumbo means that Ashland City Staff wants to “prepare amendments to the Land Use Ordinance to address the applicability of the public space (plaza) standards for large scale buildings within the Downtown Design Standard Overlay.”

The preparation of amendments before any public awareness of an issue is the reason for public outrage and public forum declarations of “we feel blindsided” comments. **Following this broken process is a major cause of our present scenario of animosity and public disillusionment.**

This is a substantial change in construction and development regulations in Ashland’s most public space. To bury it as a Consent Agenda item is the root of all evil. My strong recommendation is to forcefully deny this item. Remove it from the consent agenda, and require significant public outreach before it is even discussed by council again.

Sincerely,


Jim Falkenstein, BS Forestry, MA Communications, Blossom View Estates HOA VP,
Firewise MoTo, AshlandTrails.com founder, Razzie nominee, BRAG, IMPORTANT-
NESS, BS

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What is the vision for Downtown Ashland?



**A continuous Retail/Restaurant Streetscape
Or.....**



A series of Public Alleyways and Transient Gathering Areas